

**Saint Paul Planning Commission
City Hall Conference Center
15 Kellogg Boulevard West**

Minutes September 7, 2007

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, September 7, 2007, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. Donnelly-Cohen, Faricy, Lu, McCall, Smitten, Wencl, and Messrs. Alton, Barrera, Bellus, Goodlow, Gordon, Johnson, Kramer, Margulies, Nelson, Rosemark, and Spaulding.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Morton, *Porter, and Messrs. *Commers, and *Cudahy.
*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, for the Planning Administrator; Lucy Thompson, Patricia James, Shawntera Hardy, Jessica Rosenfeld, Christina Morrison, Andrew Jacobson, Jacob Rife, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes August 24, 2007.

MOTION: *Commissioner Barrera moved approval of the minutes of August 24, 2007. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Alton was proud to announce that the Central Corridor Development Strategy received an Honor Award from the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association. The Honor Award is the highest-level award given by the chapter. Donna Drummond has a copy of the entire plan.

Ms. Drummond added that this is an annual award and will be given out at the State Conference in Rochester. It is an award for the best planning project in the state this year. This was a huge team effort by staff, the community, task forces and the Planning Commission. Everyone should be proud of this award.

III. Planning Administrator's Announcements

Donna Drummond filling in for Larry Soderholm the Planning Administrator today. Ms. Drummond announced that the City Council denied the application for rezoning for the Bridges of Saint Paul, a 5-2 vote. A report from the League of Women Voters was distributed to the Planning Commission. This report is looking at the district councils in Saint Paul. Reading through the introduction and the recommendations, it looks like a very thoughtful report. This report will be referred to the Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee. Also, there is a draft letter, memo from Tom Beach to Chair Alton responding to questions raised in a letter from Brian McMahon asking about some issues related to the Home Depot project and a draft cover memo from Chair Alton.

IV. Zoning Committee

Commissioner Kramer reported on the Zoning Committee.

OLD BUSINESS

#07-099-317 Midway Shopping Center – Variance of required parking (1095 spaces required, 931 spaces proposed, for a variance of 164 spaces). 1460 University Avenue W, SE corner at Snelling. (Sarah Zorn, 651/266-6570)

Commissioner Kramer reported that because of the change to the interim ordinance, the Central Corridor variance for parking is not needed, and the case has been withdrawn.

#07-096-674 Midway Shopping Center – Site Plan Review for Walgreen's and Big Top Liquors. 1460 University Avenue W, SE corner at Snelling. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

MOTION: *Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the site plan review with conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

#07-099-246 Midway Shopping Center – Conditional Use Permit for a drive through sales and service. 1460 University Avenue W, SE corner at Snelling. (Sarah Zorn, 651/266-6570)

MOTION: *Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

NEW BUSINESS

#07-130-278 Long's Auto Place Inc. – Conditional Use Permit for outdoor auto sales to increase display vehicles to 65, and a variance of off-street parking (16 spaces required, 10 spaces proposed, for a variance of 6 spaces). 1566 Rice Street, between Iowa and Hoyt. (Jacob Rife, 651/266-6572)

MOTION: *Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit with conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

#07-130-356 Long's Auto Place Inc. – Conditional Use Permit for auto repair accessory to auto sales. 1566 Rice Street, between Iowa and Hoyt. (*Jacob Rife, 651/266-6572*)

MOTION: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit with conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

241 Earl Street, NW corner at Burns – Notification to Planning Commission of noncompliance with condition #10 of re-approved nonconforming use permit #06-284-541, and consideration of possible public hearing for revocation or modification of the permit. (*Patricia James, 651/266-6639*)

The Zoning Committee recommends that if the site plan work is not complete by September 25, 2007, there will be a public hearing held on October 11, 2007. The Planning Commission need not take any action on this matter at this time.

Site Plan Committee Agenda - Ms. Drummond called to commissioners' attention the Site Plan Review Committee Agenda items for the Metro Transit/I94 parking lot. Tom Beach is reviewing a site plan for a proposed park and ride at the bus barn site at I94 and Snelling. Metro Transit is looking at a variety of options to respond to the 35W bridge collapse. One of the options is a park and ride lot for up to 500 cars at the bus barn location and running a new bus route from there to downtown Minneapolis during rush hour. Site Plan staff made it clear that this is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that if approved it would be a temporary use. Metro Transit has agreed that this use would be discontinued when the bridge is opened again. They have also said that this is not something they are sure they want to proceed with.

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Central Corridor Development Strategy – Approval of resolution recommending adoption by the City Council. (*Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556*)

Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen presented the resolution to recommend adoption of the Central Corridor Development Strategy.

Donna Drummond reported that the Comprehensive Plan Committee discussed the public hearing comments from the July 13, 2007 public hearing before the Planning Commission. There was a lot of support and enthusiasm for the vision and the plan. The Saint Paul Chamber is concerned with findings as we look at possible Zoning Code changes in the future. They are concerned that we find the right balance between regulations and what the market can produce. Historic Saint Paul requested that a community building strategy related to Historic Preservation be added. The Committee agreed. Commissioner Rafael Ortega, chair of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, expressed concerns about the Fourth and Cedar block, which the City and the Development Strategy feel is a great development opportunity with the LRT line running diagonally through the block. The Rail Authority is concerned that it could compete with redevelopment around the Union Depot. There was a letter from Mayor Coleman in response to the Ortega letter, stating that the City does not see these sites as competing, and thinks that both can be strong development opportunities meeting different market needs. It's the City's position that the alignment that was studied as part of the Draft

Environmental Impact Statement, which has the alignment running down Fourth Street with a station in front of Union Depot, will best serve the “bread-and-butter” ridership, which would be residents and downtown employees. The County would like the alignment to go behind Union Depot and have it come down to the concourse level. Metropolitan Council will study both options as part of Preliminary Engineering, a more technical analysis. The City said they will abide by that analysis and conclusions. The Mayor re-iterated the City’s support for Union Depot.

MOTION: *Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen moved on behalf of the Committee to recommend approval of the Central Corridor Development Strategy by the City Council. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

STAR Program Funding – Approve sending letter of support for the STAR Program to the City Council. (Larry Soderholm, 651/266-6575)

Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen announced that at the last meeting there was discussion about the STAR Board Funding and the City Council’s suggestion that funding be diverted into the general fund. There is a letter that the Comprehensive Plan Committee endorses under Chair Alton’s signature to be sent to City Council President Lantry and City Council members supporting the current use of the STAR Board funds and not to divert that.

MOTION: *Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen moved approval of sending the letter of support for the STAR Program Funding to City Council President and City Council members. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

VI. Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee

No report

VII. Communications Committee

Chair Smitten announced the next meeting will be on October 5, 2007.

VIII. Task Force Reports

Commissioner Johnson announced on Monday September 10, 2007 the Water Comprehensive Task Force will have a sewer plant tour at 2:30 before the meeting.

IX. Old Business

None

X New Business

None

XI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary
Planning and Economic Development Department,
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,

Approved

(Date)

Larry Soderholm, AICP
Planning Administrator

Marilyn Porter
Secretary of the Planning Commission

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